

County Profile: Bergen

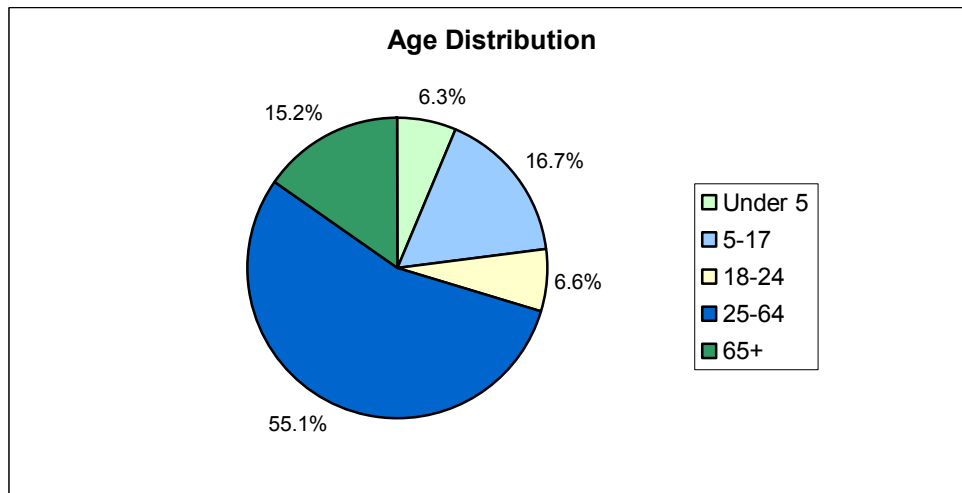


General Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 884,118 individuals reside in Bergen County's 70 municipalities. These individuals are spread out over a land area of 234.2 square miles, which translates into a population density of 3,775.5 persons per square mile. This makes Bergen County the most populous of the state's 21 counties. It is also the fourth most densely populated county.

At 7.1%, Bergen County had less growth from 1990 to 2000 than was typical for the state. However, almost all municipalities experienced growth, including both suburban communities and cities.

Bergen County has 203,054 children under the age of 18. They comprise 23% of the county's total population and 9.7% of the state's child population. Approximately 62% of Bergen County residents are of working age (18 through 64), and 15.2% are 65 years and older. At 39.1, the median age of Bergen County residents is somewhat older than the statewide median of 36.7 years of age.



Child Welfare

Bergen County's portion of statewide child abuse and neglect referrals is less than the proportion of children residing in the county. While 9.7% of all children in New Jersey

reside in Bergen County, only 2.4%, or 929 of the child abuse and neglect referrals are generated there. The patterns of abuse and neglect differ from the state pattern. Compared to statewide percentages, a greater proportion of Bergen County referrals were made for physical, emotional and sexual abuse and a smaller percentage of the referrals were for neglect. The rate of substantiated referrals is tied with Morris County for the lowest in the state.

Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals in 2001

	Bergen County		New Jersey	
	N	%	N	%
Physical abuse	479	51.6	12,382	32.0
Emotional abuse	16	1.7	330	0.9
Sexual	80	8.6	2,179	5.6
Neglect	320	34.4	22,099	57.1
Multiple types	34	3.7	1,716	4.4
<i>Total</i>	929	---	38,706	---
Substantiated rate per 1,000 children	1.1	---	4.0	---
Percent substantiated	24.5	---	21.8	---

In the Bergen County District Office, the active DYFS caseload is 2,181 children and 1,241 families. There are 283 in-state foster homes in Bergen County. There are 245 Bergen County children in foster care, which is 3.1% of the 7,807 children in foster care in New Jersey and less than the percentage of children residing in this county. Of the Bergen County children in foster care, 51.4% reside in a different county than their family, which is more than the out-of-county statewide average of 44.6%.

From 1998 to 2002, out of a statewide total of 123 deaths of children as a result of abuse and neglect, there were none of children in Bergen County. However, in 2003, there have been four child deaths involving suspected abuse or neglect. While there are no official findings as yet, two of these cases were previously known to DYFS. The number of all infants who died in Bergen County in 2000 was 50, 6.9% of the 723 infant deaths occurring in the state. The infant mortality rate of 4.6 deaths under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births was lower than the statewide rate of 6.3.

Child Welfare Outcome Measures

Information on various child welfare outcomes for Bergen County is presented in the following table.¹ The data show a number of positive outcomes for children in foster care in Bergen County. The recurrence of maltreatment in foster care is substantially lower than the national standard (2.5% vs. 6.1%). In addition, a smaller percentage of children in foster care in the Bergen County District Office re-enter care within 12 months of a prior placement (6.1% compared to 8.6%).

¹ See definitions that follow for detailed descriptions of the categories presented in this table.

At the same time, there are areas where Bergen County does not meet the national standard. A smaller percentage of children are reunified with a parent or caretaker within 12 months (51.3%) compared to the national standard (76.2%). Also, the percent incidence of abuse and neglect in foster care is the third highest in the state, and substantially higher than the national standard (1.85% compared to .57%). The percentage of cases in foster care less than 12 months with fewer than two placements is lower than the national standard (80.8% compared to 86.7%), and the second lowest in the state.

2001 Child Welfare Outcome Measures by County

	Bergen	State	National Standard
Recurrence of maltreatment	2.5%	6.4%	6.1% or less
A/N incidence in foster care	1.85%	.78%	.57% or less
Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry	51.3%	59.5%	76.2% or more
Re-enter care within 12 months	6.1%	8.2%	8.6% or less
Reduce time in foster care to adoption	15.8%	16.3%	32.0% or more
Increase placement stability	80.8%	86.2%	86.7% or more

Note. Data supplied by DYFS

Definitions

Reduce recurrence of maltreatment – of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the reporting period, the percentage who had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period.

A/N incidence in foster care – of children who were in foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that was the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry – of children reunified with parents or caretakers at time of discharge from foster care, the percentage reunified within 12 months.

Re-enter care within 12 months – of children who entered foster care during the reporting period, the percentage who re-entered care within 12 months of leaving foster care episode.

Reduce time in foster care to adoption – of all children who exited foster care to adoption, the percentage who exited within 24 months.

Increase placement stability – of all children who had been in foster care less than 12 months, the percentage who had no more than two placement settings during that time period.

Data Sources

DYFS Approved Foster Homes File, 8/4/03
DYFS Caseload Activity Report (DAR-SISM-5), 8/1/03
DYFS, Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2000
DYFS Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2001
DYFS Foster Care File Extract, 6/6/03
DYFS Statewide Summary of Foster Homes (DAR-PCISM-1), 7/4/03
NJ Substantiated Abuse and Neglect Child Fatality Analysis for 1998-2002, July 2003
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data Summary File, Population for the Counties and Municipalities in New Jersey: 1990 and 2000 (PL1)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Age and Sex (GCT-P5)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density (GCT-PH1-R)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Quick Table, QT-P2.
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Demographic Profiles, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (DP-1)

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